

THE
GREAT DAY OF WRATH AND OF GLORY.

BY REV. JOHN S. LONG.

One night, many years ago, when locked in the embraces of slumber, I had a dream; a dream that was most fearful; a dream that shook me like an ague, and thrilled me with wonder. It seemed to me, that the citizens of my native town were all assembled on some public occasion in the Academy, and on the Academy green. The day wore on amid the increasing excitements of the festival. Every one looked in the face of his neighbor, and found there nothing but gladness and security. I, myself, although but a boy, felt the strange, magnetic influence of the scene; a scene that was created for older heads and hearts than mine. It was now almost the hour of twilight, when suddenly a cry, a shriek was heard.— Every member of the crowded audience within the house rushed to the doors, where such a sight presented itself as I shall not forget to my dying day.

The whole heavens, from one extremity to the other, were in a vivid blaze. Every countenance was pallid, and every eye turned upward. The exclamation went from

lip to lip, "the judgement." I stood and gazed upward with the spectators. Great oceans of flame seemed spread out above us, which opened occasionally to display greater seas of fire far, far away in the distance. Then there would come sullen mutterings of thunder. The earth shook, the heavens shook, every thing shook. I watched the furious element as never consuming it still reached upward, higher, and higher still. Every cloud flamed, and floated on. Every star blazed and sent its lurid radiance to the scene. The vast dome of the universe was wrapped in fire, and not a single atom of the physical creation above us seemed to have escaped. I felt cold, very cold. My very heart seemed to have frozen with terror. I looked upon the citizens around me. They were speechless. The great day of His wrath had come, and they were not able to stand. Old, grey-headed men were speechless; young men and maidens were speechless; merchants, mechanics and husbandmen were speechless; lawyers, physicians and teachers were speechless. The hour of doom had struck, and the people were not ready.

While these stupenduous events were transpiring around and above me, a kind of stupefaction seemed to have settled upon my senses. Until at last being irresistably drawn to look upward again, a still grander scene opened upon my view. From the very midst of the heavens a great white throne descended. Upon it sat one like unto the Son of God. His face beamed with glory, and his head was crowned with splendors. Nearer and nearer the throne came, until at length it was arrested in the void just above us. And now, strange to relate, a minister, at that time stationed in the town, came to me, took me tenderly by the hand, and, pointing to the great white throne, said, "farewell, I must go." He left me, walked deliberately to what seemed to me to be steps leading up to the throne, entered calmly upon the awful ascent, and disappeared.

In the meantime the attention of all the spectators was turned to another exciting act in the awful drama. While the firmament was melting with fervent heat, and rapid shocks of thunder were making the earth to stagger under us like a drunken man, I became conscious of the presence of a new terror, and was borne swiftly to the rear of my position. When I reached that point, I was still more fearfully impressed, if possible, than hitherto. Very near me was a wide and deep pit, around which stood several persons whose faces were perfectly familiar to me, and they were engaged in seizing every one upon whom they could lay their hands, and casting them into this pit. They struggled to reach me. They had their emissaries everywhere among the multitude. Some they seized suddenly, and like a flash of lightning. Others they approached deliberately, and charmed them as the snake fastens upon its victim. There was a start, a cry, a dash, and the mouth of the pit closed over the convulsed sufferer. I needed no one to tell me that this pit was hell, and these men devils. It was written in its jaws, upon their faces, everywhere. At last I could bear the terrible pressure of the excitement of this dream no longer, and awoke.

Reader, I have set down the principal facts of this dream with the utmost accuracy that I could command at this distance of time. And I desire to make them the introduction to some earnest suggestions on the Great Day of God's Wrath and Glory. May the Spirit take these suggestions, and apply them to your conscience very savingly.

And at the outset we inquire, will there be such a day. Hear the reading of the Scriptures. "He hath appointed a day, in the which he will judge the world in righteousness by that man whom he hath ordained." "It is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment." "For we shall all stand before the judgment seat of Christ." "Rejoice, O young man, in thy youth, and let

thy heart cheer thee in the days of thy youth, and walk in the ways of thine heart, and in the sight of thine eyes, but know thou, that for all these things God will bring thee into judgment." "But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night; in which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, and the earth and the works that are therein shall be burned up." "Therefore be ye also ready: for in such an hour as ye think not the Son of Man cometh." "Behold, he cometh with clouds; and every eye shall see him, and they also which pierced him: and all kindreds of the earth shall wail because of him." "When the Son of Man shall come in his Glory, and all the holy angels with him, then shall he sit upon the throne of his glory: and before him shall be gathered all nations." Can such words be mistaken. Are they not like the trees, hills and rivers which a man looks at. Are they not like the winds, voices and melodies which he hears. Are they not like the pangs, pleasures and ecstasies which he feels? Yea, verily. We had as well stand with our senses all in free and vigorous exercise, and say that the material universe with its mountains, streams, harmonies, joys and pains has vanished, as to fall upon our knees before God's living inspiration, and deny the verity of the great, burning, transforming day of human accountability. Depend upon it, it comes.

This day shall be marked by judicial activity and firmness. And what is most startling, Christ who is now the mediator, shall then be the judge. Oh! to think of the slain Lamb, laying judgment to the line, and righteousness to the plummet. To think of the pierced, rent and bleeding Saviour, reigning like a king, and distributing justice like an enthroned sovereign. And yet it shall be so. From the agony and bloody sweat of the Garden; from the thorny crown and mocking robe of the hall of judgment;

from the gall and vinegar and intense anguish of the cross; and from the solitude and silence and armed men of the sepulchre, Jesus shall come up to regal dignity and judicial greatness. "Before him shall be gathered all nations." Think of that. Nations that rose, flourished and fell, before the walls of Babylon were built, or Greek and Trojan arms struggled upon the plains of Troy; nations that developed the resources of commerce, before the ships of the Argonauts had sailed on their adventurous path; nations that were excellent in science and distinguished in art, before Plato and Pythagoras learned the elements of philosophy in the land of astrology and power; and nations that had accumulated a literature, and established their universities and schools, long before the epics of Homer were written, or the Sophists had gathered their pupils in the shady groves of the Athenians. "And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God." Small politicians, spending their lives in demagogueism and avarice, shall stand before him. Small speculators, taking advantage of the necessities of their fellow men, and draining the very life blood from the veins of their country, shall stand before him. Small grocers, seducing the hearts of our unwary countrymen, and blasting the manhood of the land with their distilled ruin, shall stand before him. And small sinners, too little and mean to hate Christ openly and oppose him boldly, shall stand before him. And the great of the earth, they who have shone like suns, and dazzled like meteors, shall see the face of the Judge. Great statesmen, who have illustrated the genius of free institutions, and contended for the rights of free government, shall stand in their places before the throne. Immortal poets, radiant with inspiration and overflowing with song, shall come to the feet of the Lamb. And gallant, patriot soldiers, who went down beneath the red tide of war, waving their swords and cheering their heroic men

to the very last, shall stand in solemn array before the Captain of our Salvation. It shall be a time of close scrutiny. It shall be an occasion of unflinching administrative firmness. It shall be a season, when consciences shall arouse from slumber, and books shall be opened, and strong men shall quake and toss like a line of battle ships in a storm.

Moreover this Great Day shall be distinguished by a swift and complete destruction, or rather renovation of the physical universe. Mountains shall disappear as by the touch of an enchanter's wand. Seas shall be dried up as by a single breath of the wrath of God. Rivers shall be bared to their lowest channels as by a single flash of the judgment fires. Navies shall be swallowed up as by the first gust of a universal storm. And then the tall monuments of men, with the marks of genius upon their foreheads, and the wrecks of generations at their feet, shall pass away "like the baseless fabric of a vision." Mausolea, cenotaphs and tombs shall crumble. Splended palatial edifices shall go to ashes in an instant. Rail-roads, docks, canals and factories shall be blotted out. The temples of learning and the halls of education and refinement shall be swept away. The great theatres of deliberative and legislative power shall collapse as by the tread of an earthquake. And then, the unexplored regions above us shall be cut by the flaming chariot wheels of the divine presence. Hear the word of the prophet. "And all the host of heaven shall be dissolved, and the heavens shall be rolled together as a scroll: and all their host shall fall down, as the leaf falleth from the vine, and as a falling fig from the fig tree." The planets shall dash wildly from their orbits. The moon shall be turned into blood. And the stars shall be unsphered and rejected from giving their light, as the New Jerusalem descends from God out of heayen.

Now in all this scene of dissolution and of judgment, there shall be the highest wisdom, and the most exact impartiality. Human builders may construct their imperfect models of mechanical ingenuity and art, and, in a moment of reckless and unguarded temper, break them in pieces. Human judges may be swayed by ambition or the lust of gain, and visit injustice upon the subjects of their official action. But not so with God. When he touches the judgment torch to the magnificent, physical framework which he has created, he does it deliberately, wisely, and with a purpose. When he assembles his responsible creatures before "the great, white throne," his administration is just, and his decisions are spotless. Depend upon it, there can be no question at this point. We had better dispute the divine purity in reference to any other matter, than this of the great renovation and final reckoning. All the rules of human responsibility, all the attributes of the divine character, and all the developments of individual existence, look to this absorbing time. God is pledged to make himself no respecter of persons, as he shall distribute his punishments and rewards. And human faith, for the security of its own hopes, is compelled to anchor itself upon the divine pledges and guarantees.

But wherein shall the Wrath of God be most fearfully made manifest. In his reprobation of sin. Sin is the great enemy of his kingdom. It is contradictory to his character. It flung his angels out of heaven. It corrupted the hearts of his first earthly intelligences. It blasted the innocence of the Garden. And from that time until now, it has been busy with the hopes, joys and energies of men. It has impoverished the spirituality of the churches. It has beggared the enjoyments of the saints. It has subverted the triumphs of the cross. It has slain the bodies of the martyrs. It has poured out the blood

of missionaries and apostles. It has turned the rage of earth and hell against the gates of God. It has marshalled its legions to blot out the name of Christ. It has desecrated altars, and destroyed sanctuaries. And it has sent through the jaws of darkness an unceasing tide of human souls, to desolate bereaved hearthstones with sorrow, to fill the eye of the redeemed with pity, and to jar the walls of perdition with wailings. And can God rise up to the judgment of sin with a gentle countenance? Nay, verily. He shall come forth like a lion roaring for his prey. He shall stand up like a man of war snatching his weapons for the hug of death. The very heat and flame and thunder of a dissolving universe shall be insignificant as God launches his wrath against sin. The rending of the rocks, falling of the mountains, drying up of the seas, and sweeping away of human pomp and power, will seem unimportant when compared with that great exercise of divine strength and vengeance, which shall shake this universal frame when God arises to the judgment of iniquity. Then sin shall be seen in its true colors. No more shining as an angel of light. Its gaudy trappings shall be torn off. Its silver slippers shall be laid aside. It shall be seen as the blackest, vilest and most venomous monster. Millions of witnesses shall testify to its terrible character. The very earth itself, as it rocks, blazes and disappears, shall utter its condemnation. And God, through all the trackless regions of his might and wrath, shall pour down his inexhaustible anger upon it.

Also, in the destruction of the finally impenitent, shall the overwhelming terrors of the Almighty be displayed. The sinner knows not what a reckless game he is playing. He is trifling with the hand that shaped him from the dust. He is procrastinating with the power that filled

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him with a soul. He is trampling upon the love that ransomed him from chains. He is spurning at the blood that kept him out of hell. And can he expect, under these aggravated circumstances, to escape the torturing, consuming wrath of God. Nay, verily. God shall lay his avenging fingers upon him with a thrill, that shall freeze his existence like a dead man. He shall destroy him because he neglected the day of salvation; because he resisted the influences of truth; because he quenched the strivings of the Spirit; because he stopped his ears and turned his back upon the heralds of the cross; because he rejected the precious overtures of the Son of Man. The destruction of the body, it matters not how fearfully it may be destroyed, will be as nothing compared with that destruction. The delicate limbs may be stretched upon an inquisitorial rack. The slender bones may be wedged and pressed between the instruments of death; and the sensitive flesh may be scorched and consumed at the furious burnings of the stake; and yet all these physical sufferings will be comparatively small when placed by the side of the ruin of the soul. That destruction shall consist in the swallowing up of the immortal mind, with all its wondrous faculties, soaring ambition, and unflagging energies, in eternal night. It shall consist in the snapping asunder of all the cables of friendship and affection, which moored us pleasantly and securely in the enchanted harbors of this life. It shall consist in the stranding of our hopes, plans and prospects in the midst of a wilder storm than ever yet rent the sails of commerce, or buried the lives and fortunes of merchant-princes under the sea. It shall consist in an unending banishment from God, from friends, from glory and from home; for heaven is home. And it shall consist in the subjection of both body and spirit to the gnawings of a worm that never dies, and the burnings of a flame that is not quenched. And is not

this wrath—wrath intense, unmeasured, unspeakable? O, who can take in the signification of eternity, when that eternity is filled with blackness, and loaded down with gloom for the condemned sinner's soul! What unknown navigator can fathom the wild waves of that burning ocean, where not a single ray of mercy can ever shine upon the broken heart of the tossed and ruined mariner? And yet this is the way in which God shall deal with the proud, insolent and uncompromising reprobate. He shall leave him not a foot of ground, upon which to base an argument, petition or apology. He shall fling to him not a single plank, upon which to buoy up his despairing spirit, while his fortunes are going down, and his pleasures are being wrecked around him. But from first to last, he shall make him the victim of his indignation and anger, because he heard not Moses and the Prophets, and refused all the intercessions of the Prince of Peace.

And then, the wrath of God shall be displayed in the condemnation and punishment of the fallen angels. For says the Apostle Jude, "The angels which kept not their first estate, but left their own habitation, he hath reserved in everlasting chains under darkness unto the judgment of the great day." Of course, we cannot tell who these rebellious spirits were. Neither can we fix upon the sin which uncrowned, degraded and destroyed them. But this one thing we do know, that they are reserved in the blackness of their guilt for the day of wonders and for the God of doom. O what a time that will be. The very devils must give up their cells, their burning fetters, and come to judgment. The thrones, principalities and powers of darkness must pale and shiver before the face of the Great Judge. The agents and emissaries of guilt, which have "thronged the air, darkened heaven and ruled this lower world," must be gathered by the judgment trump to the flaming bar. And God, the great God, the unchangeable

God, shall smite them like a withered pine, and consume them like dry stubble. It will only increase the measure of their bitterness and pain, that they were once citizens of heaven, when "the morning stars sung together, and all the sons of God shouted for joy." The very fact that they were once nearest perhaps to the eternal throne, that their harps made the loudest and sweetest music, that their wings impelled them on the swiftest and noblest errands, and that their faces and crowns shone with the greatest splendor, will only make them more shining marks for the shafts of the divine vengeance. God shall hold them up to the scorn of the assembled universe. He shall proclaim, "these are the evil spirits which sought to dethrone their king, which struggled to divide heaven, which corrupted the innocence and withered the bright fields of Paradise." And he shall give them over to the fury of his thunders forevermore, without the possibility of a plea of salvation.

But wherein shall the Glory of the Great Day be most impressively revealed. Why most unquestionably in the resurrection of the dead. Hundreds of generations, even back to the first inhabitants of earth, shall burst the captivity of the grave, and come forth. The caverns of the great deep shall be opened, and the rushing tides shall roll their dead to shore. The cemeteries of proud cities, filled with sculptured marble, and adorned with the master pieces of affluence and taste, shall echo to the tread of arisen multitudes. The quiet graveyard of the secluded hamlet, shall be vacated by its long forgotten sleepers. And even the bridle-paths of the dim forest, and the silent groves of trackless and untenanted wastes shall send forth their representatives to the august revealings of God's great day. O! what a scene of thrilling interest that will be! And then, what is better than all else, the buried saints of Christ shall rise in the likeness of their Lord. Their bones may

be scattered at the grave's mouth. Their dust may have been driven by the winds. Their names may have been graven upon the sands. And yet, blessed be God, like the slain in the valley of the Prophet, when the breath of the Almighty comes upon them, bone shall come to bone, the sinews and flesh shall be laid upon them, and the House of Israel shall live. The poor missionary, who struggled with the discouragements of his destiny, submitted to hunger, heat and cold that he might carry the gospel to the heathen, and at last went down unwept and unremembered in a foreign land, shall stand up in the image of his King. The faithful pastor, who spent himself freely for the religious culture of the people, and fell at his post in the midst of his activity and zeal, "shall come again with rejoicing bringing his sheaves with him." The humble peasant, who pursued the quiet routine of charity and faith, living upon the grace of the gospel and supported by the comforts of the cross, shall leave the pine coffin of his sepulchre with the rapture and the aspirations of heaven in his soul. And the pious soldier, who was slain in the conflict of battle, while the storm of death was raging fearfully around him, and the blood of patriots and heroes was flowing like water, shall arise from his gory bed to be clothed with the garments of immortality. Truly the divine power and goodness shall be conspicuously displayed, in rending the bars of the tomb, and in dissolving the empire of death from the bodies of the saints.

Also in the creation of new heavens and a new earth shall the glory of God be most strikingly made manifest. The old order of things shall be entirely changed. Physical laws shall be abolished. The succession of the seasons shall be broken up. The watch-fires of the sky and the beacon lights of centuries shall be extinguished.—Material deformities and corruptions shall be purged away. And in the place of all this, we shall have spirit-

ual, celestial and eternal habitations fitted for the occupancy of God and of the angels. We shall walk upon streets that shine with the lustre of gold. We shall gaze upon mansions that have been wrought into the transparent delicacy of crystal, and resound with the shoutings of the redeemed. We shall stroll through immortal fields and gardens, fragrant with flowers that are fadeless and musical with songs that are unceasing. No more rugged rocks and foaming torrents, to cast the shadow of danger and desolation over the brightest landscapes. No more dreary lowlands and miasmatic regions, to chill and wither the body with disease and suffering. No more poisonous minerals and vegetables, to destroy the elasticity of health, and to cause life itself to be a burden. But from gate to palace and from plain to plain, it shall be one universal masterpiece of refinement and beauty, and the very morning stars themselves and the shouting sons of God shall exult in the new creation. And as if to make this eternal residence completely enchanting, it shall be the dwelling-place of righteousness. Sin shall be excluded from it by immutable decrees. No foot-fall of iniquity shall ever be heard in its radiant portals. No invasion of guilt shall ever blast the beauty that blooms in its cloudless clime. But from the centre of this grand, spiritual universe, out to its farthest boundaries of living trees and healing streams, it shall be one unbroken reign of purity and truth. Every shout of praise, every voice of song, every word of congratulation, and every deed of love shall be full of the soul of righteousness; and not one among all the ransomed of the Lord but shall manifest and enjoy this state.

And farther still, the glory of the Great Day shall be illustrated in the crowning of the saints with their final and long looked for reward. "And these shall go away into life eternal." Not the evanescent life of physical existence. Not the life that flows through the veins and

THE DAY OF WRATH.

L. M.

- 1 The day of wrath, that dreadful day,
When heaven and earth shall pass away !
What power shall be the sinner's stay ?
How shall he meet that dreadful day—
- 2 When, shriv'ling like a parched scroll,
The flaming heavens together roll ;
And, louder yet, and yet more dread,
Swells the high trump that wakes the dead ?
- 3 O on that day, that wrathful day,
When man to judgment wakes from clay,
Be thou, O Christ, the sinner's stay,
Though heaven and earth shall pass away !